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RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1735
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ASTANA 000052

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: OVERFLIGHTS AND NORTHERN DISTRIBUTION NETWORK
SHIPMENTS FULLY OPERATIONAL

Classified By: Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland: 1.4 (A), (B), (D)

REFTELS: A. 09 ASTANA 2190
[1](#)B. 09 ASTANA 2198
[1](#)C. 09 ASTANA 2204
[1](#)D. 09 ASTANA 2272
[1](#)E. ASTANA 0020

[1](#)1. (S/NF) This is an action request (see para 8).

[1](#)2. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Kazakhstan continues to be an important partner for the U.S. government mission to stabilize Afghanistan. Under the 2001 overflight agreement, the United States has completed more than 8000 overflights. In addition, the U.S. government has used the 2009 Northern Distribution Network agreement to ship 6439 containers to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). These transits have occurred without any major incident despite occasional bureaucratic hiccups. Post recommends expanding this successful partnership, including increasing local procurement, to support more efficient provision of military supplies in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. END SUMMARY.

U.S. COMPLETES THOUSANDS OF OVERFLIGHTS AND SHIPMENTS IN 2009

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Since implementation of the 2001 overflight agreement, more than 8000 overflights and 85 divers have occurred without major incident, including over 1000 overflights in 2009. Since the Kazakhstani government agreed to permit the transportation of commercial cargo via the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) on December 30, 2008, 6439 containers have reached Afghanistan via Kazakhstan as of January 14.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) U.S. government contacts and contractors have not reported any major problems with transportation through Kazakhstan along the NDN. The transit agreement between the United States and Uzbekistan, which requires diplomatic notes for each shipment, initially retarded movement and led to limited backlogs. Since the Uzbek government agreed to speed up the diplomatic note process, backlogs have been eliminated.

NO PROBLEMS WITH SHIPMENTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH AGREEMENTS

15. (S/NF) On December 28, Post received an e-mail request for assistance from the TRANSCOM Liaison Officer in Tashkent, which asserted the Kazakhstani Customs Control Committee requested shipping documents and manifests -- standard procedure under Kazakhstani law and agreements for the commercial shipment of goods -- for four containers destined for Manas. Post inquired whether the shippers had provided the documents, but received no reply. Post has not received any complaints that Kazakhstani Customs have failed to process, in a timely fashion, shipments free of bureaucratic and clerical errors.

16. (S/NF) Although the State Department alerted Post via e-mail of overflight denials, Post also has traced these issues to clerical errors on the part of the U.S. government and its contractors. On January 11, the Deputy Chairman of Kazakhstan's Civil Aviation Committee (CAC), Talgat Lastayev, assured Post of continued good cooperation and that the CAC has encountered no difficulties relating to air-transportation requests, including overflights.

NDN AND OVERFLIGHT REQUESTS PENDING

17. (S/NF) The Kazakhstani government has repeatedly expressed its political will to support U.S. operations in Afghanistan through the opening of a U.S. transit center in Kazakhstan and under existing overflight and Northern Distribution Network agreements (ref A). However, efforts to expand these agreements to include north-south flight corridors and military and civilian wheeled vehicles, focused on the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicles (MATVs),

ASTANA 00000052 002 OF 002

are stalled due to terrorism and legislative concerns (refs B-E). Moreover, according to the Defense Logistics Agency, U.S. contractors currently are purchasing only eight products -- with six more identified -- in Kazakhstan, out of a list of thousands of items. The Kazakhstani government repeatedly has expressed its concern that Kazakhstan has exposed itself to the risk of terrorist attacks, but has realized very few of the promised benefits to the Kazakhstani economy from local procurement. Additionally, foreign ministry officials have mentioned suspicion that the United States secretly is expanding cooperation with Uzbekistan and opening a base there while ignoring President Nazarbayev's offer of a transit center in Kazakhstan.

18. (S/NF) COMMENT/ACTION REQUEST: Post recommends that the U.S. government provide, under cover of a diplomatic note, a list of products that the U.S. government currently procures in support of its forces in Afghanistan and that U.S. government contractors could potentially procure locally. In addition, this diplomatic note explicitly should allow the Kazakhstani government to use one or more Kazakhstani entities to liaise with companies involved in OEF-related procurement transactions. Post requests detailed information on the possibility of placing MATVs into containers and other potential responses to Kazakhstan's security concerns. Post also recommends provision of additional security assistance, especially along Kazakhstan's southern border, which would help address concerns about terrorism. High-level engagement also might help break the impasse on the outstanding NDN and overflight requests.

HOAGLAND